

COMMUNITY PULSE



OCTOBER 2025

FAIR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

Fair Housing Resource Center

The Fair Housing Resource Center is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization offering several housing programs to benefit residents of Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula County, Ohio. The mission of the Fair Housing Resource Center is to promote equal housing opportunities for all persons and to advocate for fair housing and diversity in Lake and surrounding counties through the education and involvement of the public, governments, and the business community.

FHRC operates a Landlord/Tenant hot-line service for county residents to assist them in protecting their housing rights. FHRC also operates a fair housing intake complaint service for victims of housing discrimination. FHRC is a Housing Counseling agency certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides homeowner counseling such as foreclosure prevention, predatory lending, home financing and repairs.



Meet the Team

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Join our Board Today!

**Call (440) 392-0147
for more information!**

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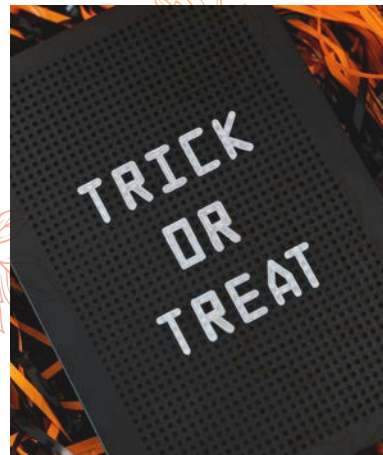
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Fair Housing Resource Center

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URGENT ACTION

Federal Class Action Lawsuit Filed Against HUD Over Withheld Fair Housing Funds

By: Patricia Kidd, Esq.

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and the Tennessee Fair Housing Council (TFHC), the civil rights law firm Relman Colfax PLLC has filed a federal class action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, challenges HUD's refusal to administer and distribute funds appropriated by Congress under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP).

For over 30 years, FHIP has been a critical resource for nonprofit organizations that investigate housing discrimination, educate communities, and enforce civil rights protections. Now, HUD is allegedly withholding both existing grant funds and new awards from pending application cycles, jeopardizing the capacity of local fair housing groups nationwide, including FHRC.

According to the complaint:

- NFHA is losing funding tied to its Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI) grant and is unable to compete for new grants meant to launch a fair housing organization in disaster-affected North Carolina.
- TFHC is preparing to terminate staff and may shut down entirely after HUD declined to award a new PEI grant that comprised 85% of its budget.

This funding gap has forced fair housing agencies to lay off staff, shut down investigations, and deny services to individuals experiencing discrimination, threatening vulnerable groups including veterans, seniors, domestic violence survivors, families with children, and people of color.

The lawsuit argues that HUD's inaction violates the U.S. Constitution and the Administrative Procedure Act. The crisis is compounded by the Trump Administration's proposal to eliminate FHIP funding entirely in the FY2026 federal budget, despite private enforcement agencies handling over 75% of all housing discrimination complaints nationwide.

NFHA President Lisa Rice called the funding halt "a civil rights emergency," stressing that HUD's failure impedes national efforts to ensure fair, affordable, and accessible housing.

Eviction vs. Non-Renewal Notice

By: Hollie Rondini, Assistant Director

Tenants often call our office in a panic after receiving a notice from their landlord instructing them to vacate the premises. While these notices can feel alarming, it's essential to know that not all notices are the same. Sometimes, the notice is the beginning of an eviction process, while other times it is simply a non-renewal of the lease. Below, we break down the differences between the two and what they mean for tenants.

Eviction Notice

An eviction notice is the first step in a legal process.

- Usually called a 3-Day Notice to Vacate (nonpayment of rent) or 30-Day Notice (health/safety violations).
- It means the landlord believes the tenant has violated the lease.
- Important: A landlord cannot change locks or remove belongings without obtaining a court order.
- If the issue isn't corrected, the landlord may file for an eviction hearing. A judge will decide the outcome.

Non-Renewal Notice

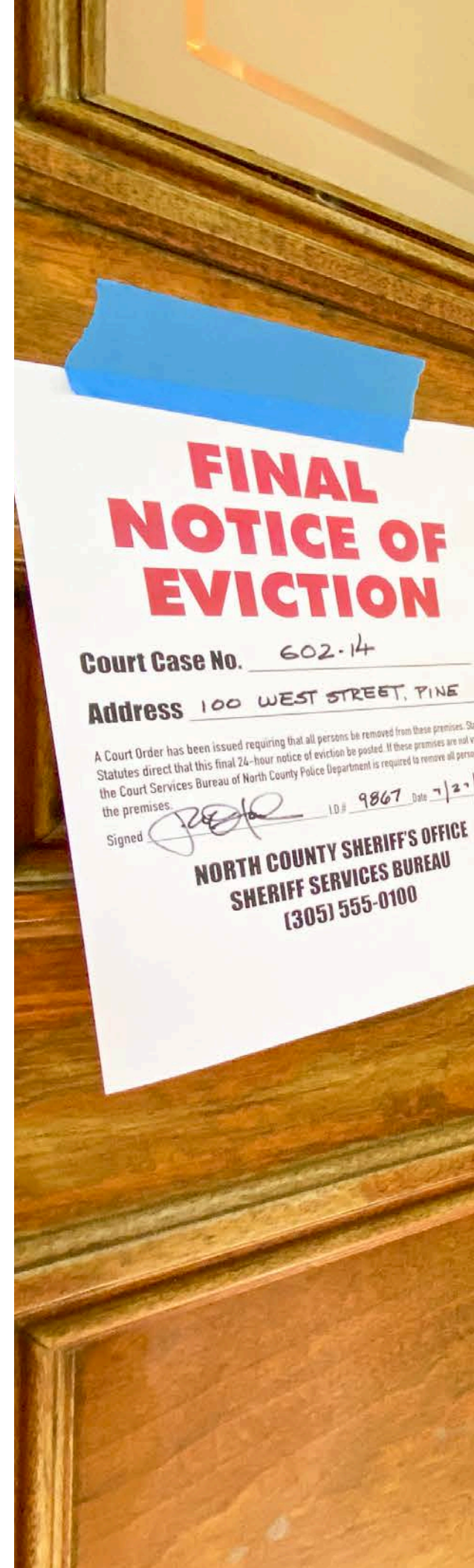
A non-renewal notice is typically sent at the end of a lease.

- Either the landlord or tenant may choose not to renew.
- Must usually be given in writing 30 days before the lease ends.
- No reason is required.
- Simply means the lease will not continue after it expires.

The Key Difference

- Eviction = lease violation and legal process.
- Non-renewal = lease ends; no court involvement (unless a tenant refuses to leave after the term).

If you ever receive a notice you don't understand, contact your landlord or reach out to our office. We're here to help you know your rights.



TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY, THAT IS THE QUESTION...

By: Harrison Daman, Test Coordinator/Paralegal



The traditional American Dream once included owning a house with a cute white picket fence, but times are changing, and for many young people entering the housing market, home ownership may not make the most sense right away.

Owning your own home certainly has its perks... more autonomy, typically more space, equity, and a sense of permanence. There are, however, several distinct drawbacks to owning a home. Some of these drawbacks include property taxes, maintenance and upkeep, and limited mobility. The decision of whether to purchase a home or rent one depends on your personal needs, wants, and desires, as well as your financial situation.



If you are the type of person who frequently moves to new places, such as cities or states, owning a home as your permanent residence might not be the best fit for you. A rental home or an apartment would offer you much more flexibility in changing up your location. Additionally, rentals typically have their maintenance needs covered by the landlord. This can be a huge financial relief for a renter, especially if something big happens, like a roof needing to be replaced or extensive plumbing work needing to be completed. Jobs like that could easily reach into the thousands of dollars, and if you are the homeowner, then that burden falls on you.



If you're unsure about the decision for your situation, please contact us at the Fair Housing Resource Center to explore our pre-purchase homebuyer education program. One of our HUD-certified housing counselors will sit down with you to review your circumstances and help explain the pros and cons of the decision.



RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Need Help with Rent or Moving Costs?

FHRC offers rental assistance programs designed to support low to moderate-income households in Lake County, Ohio. Whether you're a senior, a disabled individual, or simply need help with first month's rent and deposits, we're here to help!

Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Don't wait—apply today! Assistance is provided on a first-come, first-served basis and depends on funding availability.

Funded by:



Programs Available:

- ☒ Senior/Disabled Short-Term Subsidy
- ☒ Short-Term Subsidy for Low-Income Households
- ☒ Security Deposit Assistance
- ☒ 1st Months Rent Assistance



FAIR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

1100 Mentor Avenue
Painesville, Ohio 44077



To see if you qualify call:
440-392-0147

APPLY TODAY

For More Information

www.fhrc.org





Pros & Cons of Refinancing Your Home

By: Hollie Rondini, Assistant Director

With interest rates higher than they were a few years ago, refinancing looks different in today's market. While it may not always lower your payment the way it once did, refinancing can still be a smart move depending on your goals. Understanding the benefits and drawbacks is key before making a decision.

The most common reason people refinance is to lower their monthly mortgage payment. While that may sound ideal, keep in mind that achieving a lower payment often means extending the life of your loan. Resetting your loan back to a 30-year term could mean paying more in interest over time. If your goal is to pay off your home sooner, a better option may be to refinance into a shorter loan term with a lower interest rate, while keeping your monthly payment as close to your current amount as possible. This strategy can help save a significant amount on interest in the long run.

Another major advantage of refinancing is the ability to secure a lower interest rate. Depending on your loan balance, lowering your rate could save you tens of thousands of dollars over the life of the loan. If you currently have an adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM), refinancing into a fixed-rate loan can also provide peace of mind. Fixed rates bring stability and predictability, making it easier to plan your monthly budget without worrying about sudden changes in your payment. Of course, if rates drop even further after you refinance, you may not be able to take advantage of another refinance right away.

Finally, refinancing can also give you access to your home's equity through a cash-out refinance. This option allows you to take out a portion of your equity in cash without selling your home. Homeowners often use this money for improvements, renovations, or even debt consolidation. However, it's important to remember that tapping into your equity reduces the cushion you have available for emergencies, so this option should be considered carefully.

Refinancing can be a powerful financial tool, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. Be sure to review your goals, run the numbers, and consult with a trusted lender before making your decision.

Rumor Has It: Setting the Record Straight on Landlord-Tenant Law

By: Patricia Kidd, Esq.



*"Rumor has it a landlord can't evict you if you have young kids."
"I heard you don't have to pay rent if the landlord doesn't fix the faucet."
"They say landlords must replace the carpet when you move in."*



We've all heard them, those persistent whispers in the community that seem to take on a life of their own. In this article, we're digging into the most common housing rumors and comparing them with the facts. Because when it comes to your rights, and your housing, misinformation can do real harm.

Rumor #1: "A landlord can't evict a family with children."

The Truth: Children are protected under the Fair Housing Act from discrimination based on familial status. However, this doesn't mean families are immune to eviction. If a tenant's family or guests violate the lease (nonpayment of rent, unauthorized occupants, lease violations), the landlord may pursue a lawful eviction. What is illegal is evicting someone solely because they have children.

Rumor #2: "You can stop paying rent if something's broken."

The Truth: Withholding rent is a risky move and often illegal unless proper legal procedures are followed. In Ohio, tenants must give the landlord written notice of the issue and allow a reasonable time for repairs. If the issue isn't resolved, tenants can deposit rent with the court (Rent Escrow) according to Ohio Revised Code 5321.07. Simply not paying can lead to eviction, even if the problem is not repaired.

Rumor #3: "A landlord must replace the carpet before a new tenant moves in."

The Truth: No law in Ohio requires landlords to replace the carpet between tenants. While fresh carpet may be a nice perk, it's not a legal obligation. Landlords are only required to ensure the unit is clean, safe, and meets minimum housing standards. As long as the carpet is sanitary and not a safety hazard (e.g., mold, fraying that could cause trips), they are not required to replace it.

Rumor #4: "A landlord must give 60 days' notice before ending a lease."

The Truth: It depends. In most month-to-month tenancies in Ohio, either party must give only 30 days written notice. If there's a written lease with a set end date, a landlord generally does not need to give notice to terminate—unless the lease requires it. Always check the lease!

Why Do These Rumors Matter?

Because they give tenants a false sense of security or lead to preventable evictions, misinformation doesn't just circulate; it causes real harm, especially to the most vulnerable members of our community.

The Bottom Line:

When it comes to housing rights and responsibilities, always rely on facts, not folklore. Talk to a HUD-certified housing counselor or a Fair Housing advocate before acting on something you "heard." At Fair Housing Resource Center, we're here to help you separate rumor from reality.

Have a rumor you want us to fact-check? Send it in to Infor@Fhrc.org and we may feature it in our next edition of "Rumor Has It."



GETTING READY FOR FALL: A FRESH START TO THE SEASON

By: Dana Pritschau, Housing Counselor

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, fall reminds us that change can be both beautiful and energizing. It's a perfect time to pause, reset, and prepare—both at home and within ourselves—for the months ahead.

Fall Clean-Up and Organization

Raking leaves, tidying the yard, and swapping out summer décor for cozier touches can feel like a chore, but it's also an opportunity to refresh your environment. A clean and organized space creates a sense of calm and accomplishment, setting the tone for the busy season to come. Even small steps, like clearing out a closet or decorating with autumn colors, can lift your spirits.

Looking Ahead to the Holidays

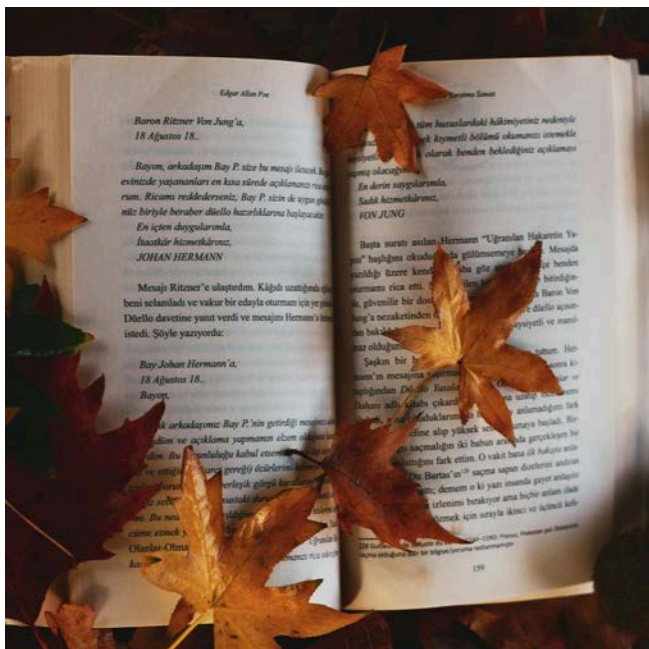
The holidays may still feel far away, but fall is the perfect time to plan ahead. Making lists, setting budgets, and scheduling gatherings early helps reduce stress later on. Preparing now ensures that when the season arrives, you'll be able to enjoy the joy and togetherness it brings instead of feeling rushed.

Caring for Your Mental Health

With cooler weather and shorter daylight hours, it's important to care for your mental health as much as your home. Take advantage of sunny fall days to walk outside, breathe in the fresh air, and admire the colors of the season. Build in moments of self-care—whether it's enjoying a cup of tea, reading a favorite book, or connecting with friends and family. Staying active and socially engaged helps keep your mood bright.

Embracing the Season

Fall isn't just about endings—it's also about beginnings. As nature sheds its leaves, it invites us to let go of clutter, stress, and old routines, making room for warmth, gratitude, and connection. By combining practical preparation with mindful self-care, you'll enter the season ready to embrace all the opportunities it has to offer.



When a Loved One on Disability Passes Away

By: Dana Pritschau, Housing Counselor



Losing a loved one is difficult, and when that person was receiving Social Security disability benefits, you may be left wondering what steps to take. Do you need to notify the Social Security Administration (SSA)? What happens to their last payment? Are survivors entitled to any benefits?

Notifying the SSA

The SSA must be informed promptly when a person with a Social Security number dies, whether or not they were receiving disability benefits. In many cases, the funeral home will handle this notification for you if you provide the deceased's Social Security number. Be sure to confirm whether they are making the notification and have a copy of the death certificate available.

Handling Disability Payments

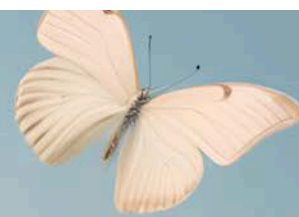
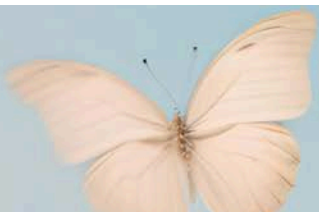
Social Security does not pay benefits for the month in which a recipient dies. However, because payments are made after the month they cover, it's common for a deposit or check to arrive that isn't owed.

For example, if someone passes away on August 15, they are not entitled to August benefits—even if the September payment for August has already been sent.

In such cases, the payment must be returned. If funds are deposited directly, you should contact the SSA so they can reverse the transaction. Occasionally, if a benefit date falls on a holiday weekend, a payment may be sent a few days early. Even if this occurs before the date of death, if it covers the month of death, it must also be returned.

Navigating Social Security rules during a time of loss can be overwhelming. A disability benefits advocate can help ensure obligations are met and that eligible family members receive any survivor benefits.

If you have more questions, the [Social Security Administration website \(ssa.gov\)](https://www.ssa.gov) contains forms and information to help you.



JOIN THE LAKE COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

The Lake County Coalition for Housing is a collaborative network of housing advocates, service providers, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, landlords, and community members.

We come together to address housing challenges across Lake County—from homelessness prevention and affordable housing development to landlord-tenant resources and fair housing education.



What We Do:

Coordinate Community Responses to Housing

Needs

- From emergency shelter to affordable housing initiatives, we work collectively to identify and address gaps in housing services.

Provide Education & Outreach

- We offer trainings, workshops, and community forums on topics like tenant rights, landlord support, fair housing laws, homelessness prevention, and more.

Promote Resource Sharing & Networking

- Connect with agencies, service providers, and stakeholders across sectors to streamline referrals and increase housing options.

Advocate for Policy Change

- Support local and state efforts that expand housing opportunities and protect vulnerable populations.



TRICKS FOR A SAFE TREAT NIGHT

By: Harrison Daman, Test Coordinator/Paralegal

Halloween will be upon us before you know it, and that means trick-or-treating with the little ones! It's always a treat to see all the cute costumes and smiling faces running up and down the street, but parents should also keep in mind a few safety pointers to make this Halloween a scary-fun experience. Take a look below and see what you think may work for you!

Wearable Lights – lack of visibility is one problem that could arise while your little ghouls are out grabbing treats. It's getting dark earlier, and we want to ensure that our kids are visible to vehicles on that spooky night. Picking up neon glowing bracelets or necklaces from the dollar store is a great way to go, or there are flashlight headbands or even wearable LED's now. Lights help kids stay visible, and visibility helps keep them safe. Plus, they have to be seen to show off that awesome costume!

Reflective tape – Any retail or hardware store should have a variety of reflective tape that glows brightly at night when car headlights shine on it. It's affordable, easy to apply, and stays in place even when walking around. This could be a great alternative to wearable lights!

Keep Close – it can be hard to keep kids' excitement contained when all they want to do is sprint from house to house to get that candy, but the best way to keep them safe is to keep them with you. Try not to let them run too far ahead, and always keep them in sight!

Safety in Numbers – If your little ones aren't as little as they used to be and they're ready to go trick or treating by themselves, it's best to have them go with their friends as a group. That way, they can help look out for each other, and if something happens, someone is there to run for help. Plus, larger groups are easier for drivers to spot in the dark.

I hope these safety tips help keep you and your family safe this season! Happy Halloween!!





Lake County's Historic Homes: Past and Future

By: Dana Pritschau, Housing Counselor

Lake County is seeing steady growth in housing and development, and local leaders are working to balance that progress with protecting historically significant houses. These historic properties help tell the story of the region—from early farms to older townhouses—and many residents believe they are essential to Lake County's character and identity.

Owning a historic home comes with unique responsibilities. Owners may be required to preserve original features such as woodwork, windows, masonry, or other architectural details. If a property is located in a designated historic district or has landmark status, changes or replacements to these features may be restricted without proper approval.

To help offset the cost of preservation, both state and federal incentives are available in Ohio:

- Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit (OHPTC): Offers up to 25% in state tax credits for qualified rehabilitation costs, typically for income-producing or multi-family historic properties.
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit: Provides a 20% credit on rehabilitation expenses if the building is certified under the National Register of Historic Places or similar programs.

Lake County's government also uses zoning, planning tools, and its comprehensive plan to guide where and how development occurs. These efforts aim to protect significant neighborhoods and historic homes while still allowing for responsible growth.

Where to Learn More

- Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO): Reviews applications for state and federal programs and provides information on eligibility. Learn more at <https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office/>
- Ohio Department of Development: Offers details on the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit program, including deadlines and qualifications. Visit <https://development.ohio.gov>
- Lake County Planning & Zoning Department: Provides zoning maps, ordinances, and details from the county's comprehensive plan.
- Local Historical Societies: Many towns and cities in Lake County have heritage boards or preservation groups that can assist with documenting historic properties, nominations, and local requirements.

ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY WINTER CRISIS PROGRAM

The Ashtabula County Community Action Agency is launching its Winter Crisis Program, offering a one-time benefit to help eligible residents maintain utility service during the cold months. For the first two weeks, assistance will be available on a walk-in basis only, with no appointments, at Ohio Means Jobs, located at 2247 Lake Ave. in the ARMC Plaza in Ashtabula. To qualify, residents must be threatened with disconnection, already disconnected, or have less than a 25 percent supply of bulk fuel in their tank.

ASHTABULA COUNTY DISTRICT LIBRARY

The Ashtabula County District Library offers a community resources database to help residents find information on food pantries, utility assistance, and other local services. The system can be accessed online at www.acdl.info, or in person at the Ashtabula Public Library, 4335 Park Ave. in Ashtabula, by calling (440) 997-9341,

LAKE METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Lake Metropolitan Housing Authority (Lake MHA) will open a limited waiting list for its Multifamily Housing Program, formerly known as Public Housing, beginning September 15, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. and closing October 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. All properties are located in Painesville and include Jackson Towers, Washington Square, and Woodlawn Homes. Applications must be submitted in person or by mail to the Lake MHA Office, 189 First Street, Painesville, OH 44077, and must be received during the open application period.



DID YOU KNOW.....?

By: Dana Pristchau, Housing Counselor



MEALS ON WHEELS: NOURISHMENT AND CONNECTION

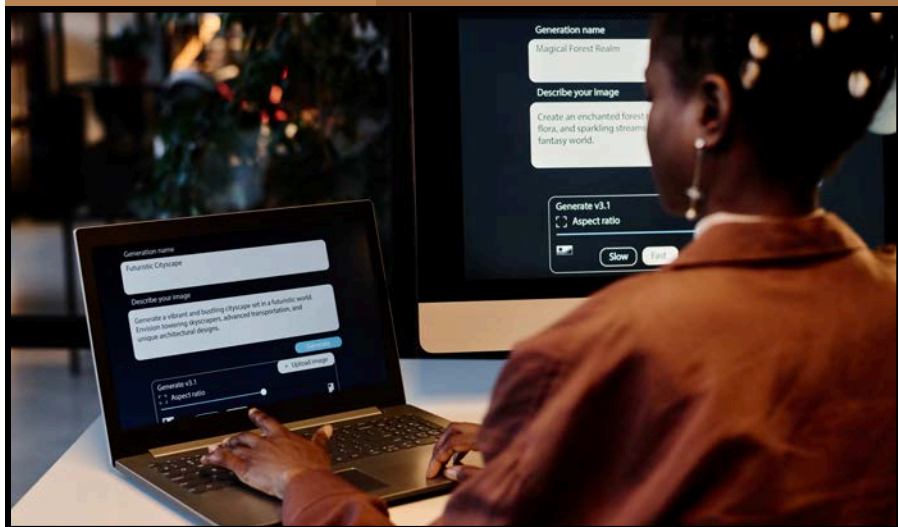
Meals on Wheels delivers more than just food—it brings daily comfort and connection to local seniors. Volunteer drivers provide hot, home-delivered meals along with a friendly visit each weekday between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. from one of five community kitchens. For added convenience, seniors may also choose to receive two frozen meals to heat over the weekend. To make a referral or request service for yourself, call 440-205-8111 or toll-free at 800-755-1402.

SUIT YOURSELF INC.

Suit Yourself's mission is to empower women in Northeast Ohio by providing career-appropriate attire and supportive resources to help them achieve independence during times of work and life transition. To learn more or connect with the program, call 440-261-0752.

DOORS OF HOPE GEAUGA

Doors of Hope Geauga provides support services to families in the county who are experiencing homelessness. Families of any composition are eligible as long as they include at least one child under the age of 18. Referrals may come directly from families themselves or through local social service providers, schools, childcare centers, community centers, churches, and United Way 211.



Fair Housing Screening: What Housing Providers Need to Know

By: Patricia Kidd, Esq.

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released updated guidance on how the Fair Housing Act (FHA) applies to the screening of rental applicants. As more housing providers turn to third-party screening services—and as those services increasingly use artificial intelligence (AI)—HUD emphasizes a vital reminder: rental decisions must be fair, transparent, and nondiscriminatory, regardless of the tools used. This guidance carries essential implications for landlords, property managers, and housing professionals.

Tenant screening companies often advertise the use of algorithms and AI to deliver quick, “objective” decisions. However, many of these systems rely on flawed or outdated information and fail to take into account an applicant’s specific circumstances.

A denial recommendation might be based on an eviction that was dismissed, a low credit score caused by domestic violence, or a criminal record unrelated to housing that is tied to a disability. HUD makes clear that screening tools must be accurate, up-to-date, and context-aware. Importantly, housing providers must retain control of the final decision—technology should inform, not dictate, the outcome.

Even if you use a third-party screening company, you are legally responsible for the decisions made at your property. HUD encourages providers to customize screening criteria to reflect their own, legally compliant policies rather than relying on default settings. Housing providers should not automatically deny applicants based on a score or recommendation without first reviewing the underlying report. Additionally, applicants must have a fair opportunity to explain or dispute information that may be incorrect or taken out of context. Transparency is essential: applicants should know what information will be considered, what standards they must meet, and how to appeal a decision or request a reasonable accommodation.

Some screening practices are especially prone to discriminatory effects. Credit scores, for example, do not reliably predict rental payment behavior and often reflect historical disparities in access to credit. Providers should consider other financial indicators such as rental payment history, income, or housing assistance. Eviction records also require close scrutiny.





Fair Housing Screening: What Housing Providers Need to Know Continued....

Black, Hispanic, and female renters are disproportionately impacted by eviction filings, many of which never result in an actual eviction. Screening based solely on the presence of an eviction filing, without considering the outcome or timing, can lead to unfair exclusions. Criminal records must be evaluated carefully as well—blanket bans are illegal. Instead, providers should assess the nature, severity of an offense, and allow applicants to present evidence of rehabilitation or mitigating circumstances.

To comply with fair housing laws, housing providers should follow several best practices. First, screening policies should be put in writing and made publicly available. Denial decisions must be specific and detailed, not based on vague “pass/fail” labels. Applicants should be offered a clear process to appeal or provide additional information. Staff should receive regular training on fair housing responsibilities. Finally, screening vendors should be carefully evaluated to ensure their tools support—not hinder—compliance and equity.

Tenant screening is more than a technical process—it is a civil rights issue. Every applicant deserves to be evaluated based on their own merits, not flawed algorithms or generalized scoring systems. By following HUD’s guidance, housing providers can reduce legal risk, increase access to housing, and contribute to a rental market that is fair, inclusive, and just.

For more information, contact us.

SCARY GOOD HOUSING RIGHTS

P G B H T R E A T F A I R H L
U T H A A R L S Y Z D G O O E
M E R O T U I A A X O M V U A
P N Q I S H N C N F E X L S S
K A B U G T P T K D E A C I E
I N G M I H G C E Z L P A N V
N T I C O T T J F D B O R G L
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B J R P A T Z G N U M C J F O
G L T L U Q F K Y E Q Y R Y K
M U H T S P F C N F Z V D V P

FIND THESE WORDS:

- PUMPKIN
- GHOST
- BAT
- HAUNTED
- TRICK
- TREAT
- FAIR

- LEASE
- TENANT
- LANDLORD
- HOME
- SAFE
- EQUITY
- RIGHTS
- HOUSING



11TH ANNUAL

Chili

COOK OFF

Join the Geauga Housing Coalition for our annual Chili Cook-Off! Enjoy chili, cornbread, coleslaw, and homemade desserts, plus door prizes, a 50/50 raffle, silent and Chinese auctions, and more fun for all.

JOIN US!

NOVEMBER 14, 2025

Time: 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Location: 8200 Cedar Rd.
Chesterland, Ohio 44026

Tickets: \$15.00 per ticket

All Pre-Sale Tickets come with 5 free raffle tickets!

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT
ORGANIZATIONS WORKING
TO PREVENT
HOMELESSNESS IN
GEAUGA COUNTY

Dear Housing Hollie,

I've been renting my apartment for almost three years now. Recently, my landlord mentioned that they're planning to raise my rent when it's time to renew my lease. I understand prices go up, but the increase seems steep, and I'm worried I won't be able to afford it. Are there rules about how much a landlord can raise the rent?

Sincerely,

Feeling Priced Out

Housing



Dear Feeling Priced Out,

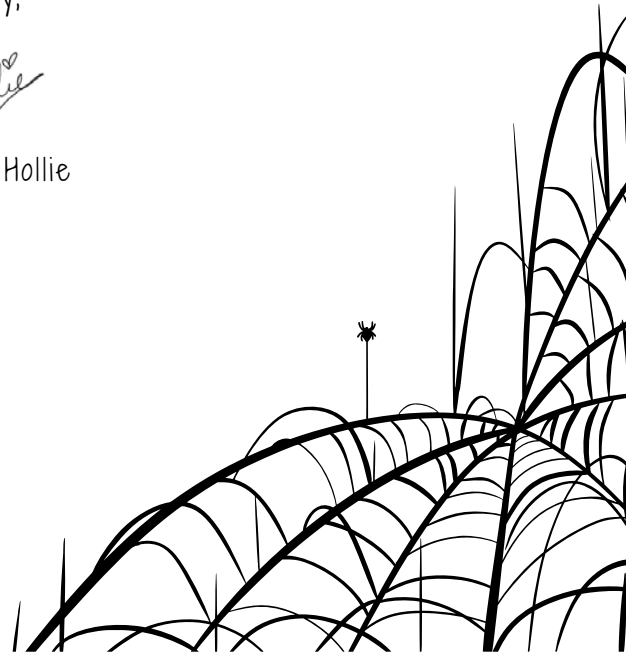
Great question! In Ohio, there are currently no statewide rent control laws, which means landlords generally have the right to raise rent as much as they want once a lease term ends. However, they must give proper notice before doing so. Typically, this means at least 30 days' notice before the new lease term begins.

While it may feel frustrating, the best thing you can do is review your lease agreement and check the timing of the notice. If the increase is truly unaffordable, you may want to negotiate with your landlord for a smaller increase or explore other housing options before your lease expires.

If your landlord does not provide you with a proper 30-day notice, please call our office for assistance at 440-392-0147.

Sincerely,

Housing Hollie



Dear Housing Hollie,

I live in a rental home and recently noticed some serious maintenance issues – a leaky roof and mold in the bathroom. I've reported them to my landlord, but weeks have passed with no repairs. I'm worried these issues could affect my health. What are my rights when it comes to getting repairs made?

Sincerely,

Tired of Waiting

Hollie



Dear Tired of Waiting,

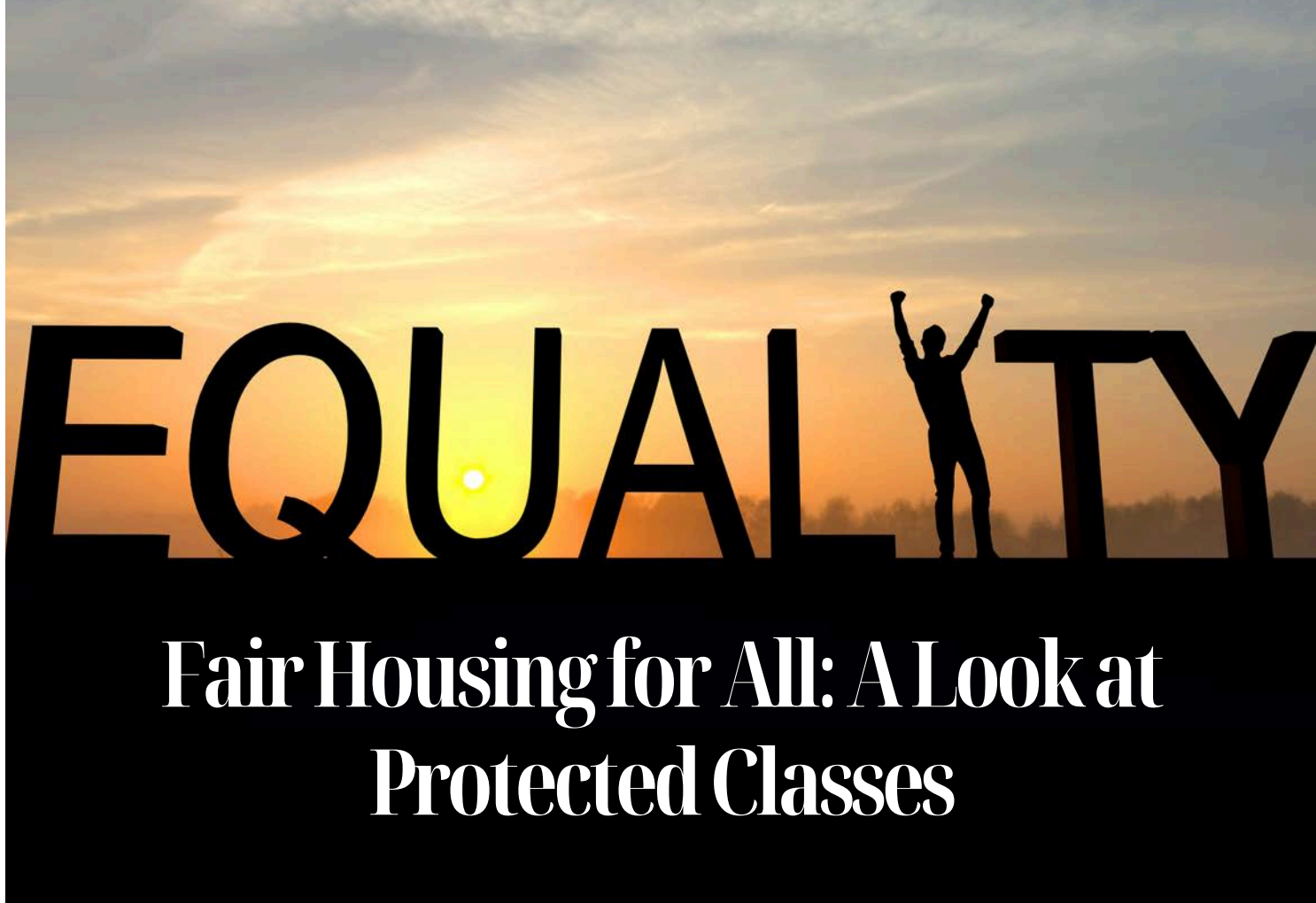
You're right to be concerned. Under Ohio law, landlords have specific responsibilities to keep rental properties in a safe and habitable condition. This includes fixing major issues such as leaks, mold, heating problems, or anything that impacts health and safety.

When your landlord fails to make repairs after you've reported them, you have options. First, always put repair requests in writing and keep a copy for your records. If the landlord still doesn't respond, you may be able to deposit your rent with the local court until the problems are fixed. This process is called rent escrow and it helps ensure tenants aren't paying full rent for unsafe or unlivable conditions. Be careful not to withhold rent on your own, as this can lead to eviction proceedings.

If the situation affects your health or safety, don't wait – contact your local housing authority or fair housing organization for guidance. Everyone deserves a safe place to live.

Sincerely,

Hollie
Housing Hollie



Fair Housing for All: A Look at Protected Classes

Most people don't think much about fair housing protections until they face a situation where their rights are violated. Unfortunately, this happens to thousands of people every year. One reason many don't give it much thought is that they don't see themselves as part of a group that these laws protect. The truth is, everyone belongs to a "protected class," and everyone has rights under the law.

Under the Fair Housing Act, there are seven protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. Discrimination occurs when someone in one of these groups is treated differently than someone outside the group in a similar situation. For example, if a person with a disability and a support animal is charged higher rent than a tenant without a disability for the same apartment, that is overt discrimination—discrimination that is obvious and direct.

But discrimination isn't always easy to spot. Sometimes it is subtle, unintentional, or hidden in routine practices. For instance, a real estate agent might only show an African-American buyer homes in predominantly African-American neighborhoods because they assume it would be a "better fit." Even if not meant to cause harm, this practice is still discriminatory.

Whether discrimination is obvious, subtle, intentional, or accidental, the Fair Housing Act prohibits any act—or failure to act—that unfairly impacts people in protected classes. If you believe you are experiencing discrimination, please contact us.





JOIN

THE ASHTABULA COUNTY

HOUSING COALITION

Who are we?

The Ashtabula County Housing Coalition is a network of agencies, organizations, and businesses dedicated to improving housing opportunities in Ashtabula County.

Why Join?



Stay Informed – Get updates on local housing initiatives, programs, and services.



Network & Collaborate – Connect with industry professionals, community leaders, and housing advocates.



Be a Voice for Change – Share your insights and contribute to innovative housing solutions.

Join Us Today!

Your involvement strengthens our mission. Whether you're an expert, advocate, or concerned citizen, your voice matters!

Contact Us

For more information reach out to Alice Harden at aliceh@doyccac.org



Contact us for More information

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BEHIND EVERY DECORATED DOORSTEP
IS A STORY

FHRC WORKS TO ENSURE EACH ONE IS
BUILT ON FAIRNESS AND OPPORTUNITY

